

# Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

January 13, 2003

7th Congressional District of Maryland  
1632 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515  
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*A message from  
Congressman Elijah E. Cummings*



*It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. While serving you, I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.*

*Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress*

## **Congressman Elijah Cummings' District Offices:**

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## **Congress Passes Extension on Unemployment Benefits**

After insisting that House Republican leaders give high priority to helping unemployed Americans, Congressman Cummings voted to pass a bill that would extend unemployment benefits to laid-off and displaced workers whose benefits are exhausted. Currently, the nation's unemployment rate is 6 percent.

The measure, which was signed into law on January 8, would continue providing laid-off workers with federally-funded benefits for another 13 weeks. Congressman Cummings noted that this bill would help an estimated 10,000 unemployed workers in Maryland, including approximately 5,276 workers in Baltimore.

"This measure will now help thousands of Maryland residents pay their mortgage or rent, buy food, and pay other critical bills, while they are looking for a job."

Laid-off workers are generally eligible to receive 26 weeks of state-funded benefits. Last March, Congressman Cummings and his Democratic colleagues succeeded in urging the House Republican leadership to pass a bill extending the 26-week period to a total of 39 weeks. However, with a slow economy, more than 2 million workers are still out of work across the nation and need financial assistance as they struggle to find permanent employment.

"Although I applaud House leaders for their prompt attention to this matter, I join my Democratic colleagues in expressing concern that this bill does not go far enough," Congressman Cummings said. "The bill fails to provide aid to at least one million workers whose benefits expired long before December 28."

To address this concern, Congressman Cummings will continue urging House Republicans to consider a Democratic plan that would immediately create an estimated 1 million jobs.

## **Baltimore Offices to be Centralized at Park Avenue**

As of Monday, January 13, 2003, the Druid Park and Liberty Road Offices of Congressman Elijah E. Cummings will be consolidated into one office located at 1010 Park Avenue, Suite 105 in Baltimore, 21201 near downtown.

The new telephone number is (410) 685-9919. The new fax number is (410) 685-9399.

"The new location will be central to a majority of my constituents," Congressman Cummings said. "I invite constituents to come and visit the new office."

Validated parking is available for visitors at the adjacent public parking garage located between 1010 and 1040 Park Avenue.

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Until June, the phone number for the Liberty Road location will be re-routed to the above referenced numbers.

Information on the Howard County outreach centers will be available shortly. The Catonsville office will continue to be located at 754 Frederick Road in Catonsville, MD 21228. The Washington office will also remain at the same location, 1632 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Congressman Cummings Joins Fight for Adequate Education Funding under the No Child Left Behind Act

On the one year anniversary of the historic *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, Congressman Cummings joined his colleagues in condemning President Bush for his Administration’s failure to ensure the success of the legislation designed to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their more affluent peers.

“President Bush has failed to call for the funding required by NCLB and continues to implement regulations in a manner that could perpetuate inequalities in education,” Congressman Cummings noted. “Unless the Administration immediately reverses its inappropriate actions, there will continue to be a wide achievement gap.”

The Administration’s budget falls \$7 billion short of the resources promised in the Act. In addition, the budget reduces the FY 2003 education budget by \$90 million compared to the previous year’s budget. In addition, the budget fails to fully fund special education, affecting more than 6 million American children with disabilities.

Congressman Cummings also noted that the Education Department’s implementation of the law actually weakens the reforms embodied in NCLB. The following are among the concerns in this area:

- ! An “unfunded mandate” to build schools and hire qualified teachers
- ! Uncertified teachers who are deemed “highly qualified”
- ! Different tests for different students
- ! Allowing discrimination with federal funds
- ! Denying basic civil rights protections for children

“The crux of NCLB is holding states and schools to clear, high standards for student performance,” Congressman Cummings said. “We cannot hold our schools and students accountable to standards they are not adequately funded to reach.”

Congressman Cummings Leads Congressional Black Caucus in Condemning President Bush’s Renomination of Controversial Federal Judicial Nominees

On January 9th, Congressman Cummings, as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, led the Caucus in condemning President Bush's nominees to the federal judiciary — the same nominees whom the President put forth and the Senate did not approve during the last term of Congress. Many of the controversial nominees have been criticized for their poor civil rights records.

At the nationally-aired press conference on Capitol Hill, Congressman Cummings noted that just weeks ago, President Bush condemned the racist and segregationist policies of the nation’s past.

“The Congressional Black Caucus is deeply disappointed that the President's actions this week with respect to judicial nominations fail to live up to those healing words.”

Congressman Cummings expressed concern that if the Senate confirms many of these nominees to the federal bench, the progress toward national reconciliation on roll during the last 50 years could be reversed.

The press conference did not outline each and every controversial nominee. However, Congressman Cummings noted that President Bush’s re-nomination of Federal District Judge Charles W. Pickering, Sr., to the U.S. Court of Appeals (a nomination that was previously rejected) to be especially troubling.

“We are deeply concerned that Judge Pickering's record reflects a continuing judicial insensitivity — even hostility — toward key principles and remedies that safeguard the civil rights of all Americans,” Congressman Cummings said.

Congressman Cummings emphasized that the records of these judges are significant because once federal judges are confirmed by the Senate, they serve for life.

“The continuing de facto segregation and inequality in America cannot be whitewashed by the President's words. Positive actions are required and these nominations do not reflect that sense of positive action,” Congressman Cummings said. “The decisions made by those federal judges will have an extraordinary impact upon the lives and liberties of all Americans, including the lives of generations yet to be born. The judges will preside over cases that could overturn much of the progress that this nation has made during the last century with respect to civil rights, environmental protection, health, safety and our entire constitutional framework.”

On behalf of the Caucus, Congressman Cummings encouraged the Members of the Senate to work together on a nonpartisan basis to confirm only those judicial nominees who represent the values and interests of all Americans.